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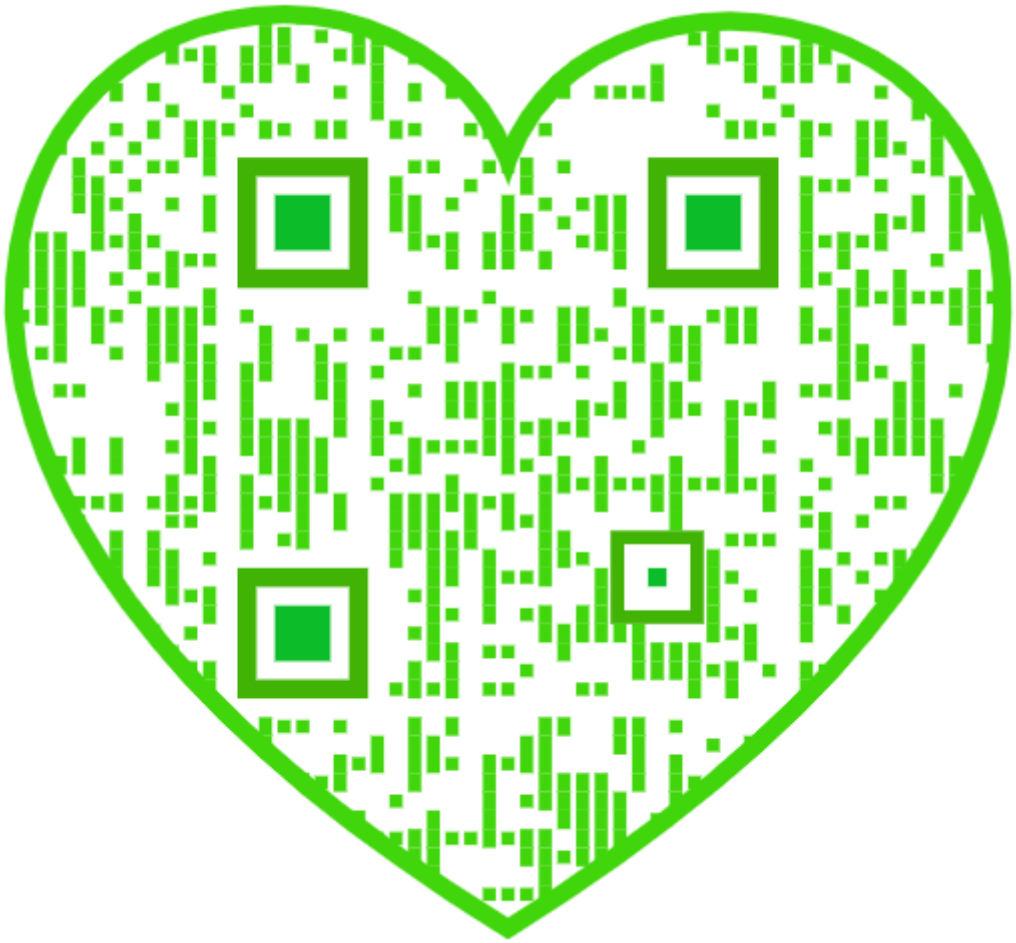
A Reading Circle Manual.

By H. J. Desmond.



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A Reading Circle Manual.

How to Form and Conduct Reading Circles. Lines of Work and Suggested Programs.

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By Humphrey J. Desmond.

Author of "Mooted Questions of History," "The Church and the Law", "Chats Within the Fold", etc.

MILWAUKEE:
THE CITIZEN COMPANY,
1903.

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A Reading Circle Manual.

OUR READING CIRCLES.

FROM 1890 to 1897, there was a blossoming out, east and west, of Catholic reading circles. Thirty such organizations existed in Chicago in 1895, and ten in St. Paul Every convent in Iowa and darkest Missouri had its circle. Even Kansas felt the impulse. The summer schools came into existence, and a monthly magazine, supplemented by a dozen or more new text books, responded to the awakened interest.

Then hundreds of young women and dozens of young men heard for the first time of a Newman, of a Catholic history of England, of the Catacombs,

and a score of other topics, which had heretofore not interested them. It was, on the whole, a spur of great value to our community's intelligence. The periodic lethargy, which ensues as a matter of fashion after all such movements, came, and is now upon us, but there are periodic signs of a new interest in the reading circle. When the Chautauquan circles, among our separated brethren, reached their lowest ebb, the Christian Endeavor movement sprang into life. The same impulse, under transformation, may interest our Catholic young people again. Good came of it; good will come out of it again.

Of course, it is some question whether the church can, with propriety, be made a social center after the fashion of the meeting house, even supposing the conditions were favorable.

But it seems entirely accordant with the larger purposes of the church to let it become a center for an intellectual life of some kind. The reading circle movement is entirely worthy of the serious attention of all Catholics engaged in church work. In a measure, this movement is a continuation

of Christian education—perhaps along the lines of university extension, and perhaps in a more modest way.

There is a constant demand for a series of brief and pertinent suggestions among those who, in different localities, and at recurring intervals, feel the need of reading circles and literary associations. It was to meet this demand that the following paragraphs are written—more, however, with a view to direct and stimulate than to cover the subject with the fullness of a treatise.

WAYS AND MEANS.

MEMBERSHIP: Who shall be invited to form our reading circles? We first think of the Catholic professional men in our community, our lawyers, doctors and journalists. We next think of the young women in the teaching profession. These classes are the pillars of the Catholic intellectual movement. But there are also (if we seek them out), many Catholic men in mercantile and industrial avocations, who are more or less desultory readers, and who can give an account of their reading. There are Catholic women, with a convent or high school training, who would gladly continue that culture of mind for which they have acquired a bent. There are young men and women with a latent desire for a wider knowledge of questions of the day and the lore of books, than they presently possess. Then there is the patriotism of creed, which always responds to an invitation to

learn more about Catholic books, Catholic writers, Catholic history and Catholic views, under Catholic intellectual auspices.

Congeniality in the Membership: In large cities it is possible to bring together a circle of Catholic college men who are able to take up, say, the reading of Dante with some likelihood of the requisite fundamental understanding of the historical, theological and rhetorical aspects that give a chief value to such a study. It is possible to specialize the work, when a fair average of advanced education exists among the membership. But as a rule, and this is especially true in smaller communities, there are wide differences of education among the members of the Catholic reading circle.

This condition, however, does not prevent the taking up of a line of study, or a program of entertainment more or less advantageous to all the members. A common school pupil, a high school student, a college alumni and a professional man, all cut the pages of a high class magazine like

The Century with equal interest. It has entertainment and instruction for all of them. The work of the reading circle may be scaled and adjusted to meet a like diversity of interest; and to profit all.

Social Life: Assuming that there is a great and absorbing degree of earnestness for intellectual advancement among the members, it is probably true that the best and most substantial work can be done, if young men go apart by themselves, and young women emancipate their circle for the time being from the necessity of male escorts.

Katherine Conway, who has rendered great service to the Catholic reading circle movement, is strongly opposed to co-education herein. She furnishes us this very interesting view:

"Sufficient reason seems to me to exist in the fact that in the older sections—in the west it may be different—young men would never come to the reading circles with the young women in anything like equal numbers. There would be just enough to constitute an element of distraction—

to embarrass the timid and diffident among the women—while in turn the overwhelming majority of women would be an embarrassment to some of the men.

"Then human nature would assert itself. The cleverer and prettier women would have escorts, and the rest would be neglected on the homeward way, and personal rivalries, disappointments, and the like, would interfere very seriously with attention to essays and discussion."

However, Miss Conway, in a missionary spirit, makes this concession:

"While restricting active membership and study meetings to women, the lecture courses, parlor talks and social entertainments should be open to men also, in order that the circle may exercise directly its beneficial influence on the community in general."

Still, the social life is a desideratum in itself. No doubt it stimulates the intellectual life, too. Society, under the Ægis of literary study, is apt to be both beneficial and pure in its influences. We ought to cultivate a social life. We ought to cultivate an intellectual life. The former will round

off the angles of the latter.

Why not cover both of these excellent purposes in the one movement? The social side may attract to the reading circle some young people who will vote the literary side a bore; but if they only listen, they will get value out of their attendance; and usually they are willing to subordinate themselves to the spirit and purpose of the society.

Large or Small? Do we wish our reading circles (which term we may use to include literary organizations generally), to be large or small? That will depend, (*a*) on the work you take up; (*b*) the size of the community you live in; (*c*) the place you meet, and (*d*) your intensity for the purely intellectual purpose.

The smaller circle is, perhaps, better for the more profitable kind of intellectual work. You can select your membership with more care and with a direct view to their special capability for the study contemplated. If the circle meet at the homes of the members, an organization limited in membership to twenty or thirty, is un-

doubtedly more convenient. A large circle is most easily possible in a city where there are a number of Catholic congregations to draw from, and when it is contemplated to rent a hall for the meetings. If the nature of the program to be followed be popular rather than studious, if it be made up of essays and lectures, discussions of questions of the day, or if it outline a study of Christian doctrine, Biblical history, Catholic authors, etc., etc., which topics usually admit of popular treatment, there is no reason why the circle should be restricted in membership; the larger it is, perhaps the better work it will do, and the more benefit it will confer on its immediate community.

How to Go About it: John Boyle O'Reilly once said that ten young men acting with a common and intelligent purpose and in earnest about it, can rock an empire. Two or three persons, desiring the organization of a reading circle, can usually bring it about. They may go among their friends, and find a dozen others similarly inclined.

Then call a meeting, either by personal notice, by mail, by announcement from the pulpit, if the circle is attached to a parish, and the pastor so advises, or by notice in the press. The advice of the priest is always most desirable, both at the inception and in determining the general program of the reading circle. His many duties may not always permit him to attend the meetings of the reading circle, but his cordial sympathy may be taken for granted. There is no safer guide when it comes to selecting text books and sources of information on current questions of a Catholic nature, than the priest.

There should be enough capability for initiative in every Catholic community to enable the meeting, when called, to organize itself out of its own membership. Usually, those concerned in calling the meeting together will have in view some proper persons to act as chairman and secretary. The desirability of a reading circle and the general purpose of the proposed circle, should be outlined by at least two of those present, who, we will suppose, have prepared themselves in advance. Then

a general discussion may ensue. Before adjournment, committees should be appointed as follows:

A committee to draft and report for adoption at the next meeting a constitution and by-laws.

A committee, with the chairman and secretary ex-officio members, to issue the call for the next meeting, with authority to determine the time and place.

A committee on program to outline the general course of study, or entertainment to be taken up, subject to approval or amendment by the meeting at large.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEADERS.

A SYMPOSIUM.

THE following paragraphs, selected from letters and essays and addresses of men and women active in our Reading Circle movement, are here subjoined as furnishing some excellent hints and suggestions. These ideas are not connected or confluent, but they are so many detached counsels on a variety of matters that come up in the experiences of the Reading circle votary.

Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy: "When the representatives of the Catholic Reading circles met in New London at the first session of the Summer School, the aim and purpose, the inspiration and spirit of the whole movement found apt expression in the ringing words of the preacher of that memorable day. His text was, and it was the burden of his discourse, 'Let there be

Light.' These four words summed up the end that should be ever kept in view by the members of the Catholic Reading circles; as the motto of the Catholic Summer School of America —"Deus Illuminatio Mea"—God is my Light—tells its members where true strength and guidance are to be found."

Rev. John F. Mullaney: "During the past twenty years that I have been an organizer of Reading circle work —my plan has been a very simple one. First, I call together a few congenial people, male and female, all animated with a desire for self-improvement. I have always tried to secure a number for each circle with some special fitness for intellectual work. Others might be admitted with little or no groundwork, but with goodwill and an earnest desire for self-improvement—this is an essential condition. The next step is to select one, two or three studies for the circle. I find this plan to be productive of good results. For instance, take English history with English literature and a desultory course of English reading. The ob-

ject of this reading course is to illuminate the various periods or epochs of English history. I find this method very stimulating."

Katherine Conway: "We do not aim to make our courses exhaustive, else we had necessarily been still on our first. We aim simply to make them suggestive and stimulating. We aim to create a wholesome appetite for good reading, both in distinctively Catholic and secular lines, and to show where the appetite can be gratified. * * One foundation principle with us is that intellectual ability can show itself in many ways just as beautiful and acceptable as the literary way. The circle creates a field for our musical and elocutionary gifts, for our business capacity, executive ability and social graces.

"Another of our foundation principles is that—if one must choose—a sweet and noble character is a better thing than a brilliant intellect, and that kindness goes ahead of cleverness every day.

"A third point in the arrangement of study courses is not to aim too high

by selecting topics which will not hold the interest of the great majority of the circle."

Warren E. Mosher: "To all those engaged in the work, or about to engage in it, I would offer a few words of advice. 1. Beware of desultory habits of reading. Read with a purpose. 2. Catholic circles should consider well the advantages of a union of circles and conformity to prescribed rules of books and reading. The Chautauqua plan demonstrates the power of united action on these lines. 3. Every one engaged in this work should not only be readers of books, but buyers of books. We cannot expect literature of the highest merit unless we are willing to generously support Catholic writers and Catholic publishers."

Rev. J. L. O'Neil, O.P.: "Do not commit the error of treating books as fashions, good for the season and then to be thrown away. * * Seek the few books that are immortal. * * Seek the books of genius, of the men who think and who make you think."

Maurice Francis Egan: "In order

to study English literature it is not necessary to read many books; but it is necessary to read a few books carefully. The earnest student of literature makes no pretensions. He reads a few books well, and by that obtains the key to the understanding of all others."

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

TWO FORMS.

BREVITY in a constitution and by-laws is desirable. After a circle is in running order, there is usually but little reference to a constitution. The program is the real thing. Merely by way of suggestion, the following constitutions and by-laws are here subjoined.

CONSTITUTION.

Art. I. This circle shall be known as the Newman Reading circle. All persons present as charter members, at the first three meetings, and signing the constitution and by-laws, and subsequently all other persons elected by the executive committee, and duly qualifying, shall be members thereof.

Art. II. The officers of this circle shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer, who shall hold their offices from the time of their election to the first regular meeting of the circle in May of each year, or until their successors are elect-

ed and qualified. Their duties shall be those usually appertaining to their respective offices.

Art. III. A program committee, consisting of three members, shall be appointed by the president at the first regular meeting subsequent to his election, which committee shall, subject to instruction by the circle, outline and arrange the program for each meeting.

The program committee, together with the officers, shall constitute the executive committee, which committee may, by a two-thirds vote, admit new members to the circle. Said executive committee shall have charge of the general business of the organization, subject to the approval and direction of the circle.

Art. IV. The annual election of officers shall take place at the first regular meeting in May of each and every year. All elections shall be by ballot.

Art. V. These articles may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided written notice of such amendment be given at a previous meeting.

BY-LAWS.

The by-laws may regulate, (1) the time and place of meeting; (2) the dues and initiation fee, if any; (3) the date of the first election of officers; (4) what number shall constitute a quorum; (5) what rules of order shall govern (Robert's, Cushing's or Reed's); (6) the order of business at each meeting, which may provide for a brief intermission; (7) the method of altering the by-laws.

The order of business is an important one as determining the success of the circle. Two recommendations are here made: *First:* Place the matter of unfinished and new business after the literary program, so that, if anything must be cut, it will not be that feature for which the organization primarily exists. *Second:* A recess at the middle of the program will do much for the social life of the circle, and prevent that weariness which two hours of steady intellectual work is apt to engender. The following "order of business" is suggested:

1. Call to order (in some circles this may be followed by prayer; and again, in smaller circles, by roll call

with quotations).

2. Reading and approval of minutes.

3. First part of the literary program.

4. Intermission.

5. Second part of the literary program.

6. Reports of committees.

7. Unfinished business.

8. New business.

9. Adjournment.

The following outline of a constitution is furnished by Mr. Warren E. Mosher of Mosher's Magazine (formerly the Catholic Reading Circle Review):

NAME AND OBJECTS.

1. This circle shall be called ....
.....

2. Its object shall be the intellectual and social benefit of its members.

OFFICERS.

1. The officers shall be a spiritual director, president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, elected by ballot at each annual meeting.

2. The general management shall be in care of an executive board, which

shall consist of the spiritual director, the four other officers and two members of the circle.

3. These two members shall be appointed by the president immediately after the election.

4. The executive board shall provide places for meetings; prepare the program; assign parts to members, giving at least two weeks' notice; receive, and in the case of vacancies, propose the names of all candidates for membership; call needed special meetings; and act for the circle in the interval between meetings, subject to the approval of the circle at the next regular meeting.

MEMBERSHIP.

1. The number of members shall not exceed.....

2. In case of vacancy, any candidate reported by the executive board may be elected by the majority of those present.

3. Each member shall annually pay a fee of ..... and sign this pledge: I, the undersigned, agree to study and abide by the constitution and rules of the ..... circle; and in order to maintain its good standing and gener-

al welfare, I hereby pledge myself to perform all duties assigned me by the executive board, or to provide a substitute, unless excused by the committee.

MEETINGS.

1. The annual meeting for organization shall be held on the second Saturday of September, and the regular literary meetings on the first Monday of October, and every Monday thereafter till June 15.

2. The meetings shall be at 7:30 p. m., and should be called to order for business precisely at 7:45 p. m.

3. A majority of the active members shall constitute a quorum for transacting business; but the members present at any meeting duly called shall be a quorum for carrying out its program of exercises.

4. The business shall be done in accordance with the parliamentary rules in Cushing's Manual.

AMENDMENTS.

1. This constitution may be amended or suspended only by the vote of two-thirds of the entire membership or the unanimous vote of those present at a legal meeting.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

1. Prayer.
2. Roll-call answered with quotations.
3. Reading of minutes.
4. New and miscellaneous business.
5. Literary exercises.
6. Adjournment.

SOME ACTUAL PROGRAMS.

FROM a mass of reports of Reading circles published in The Reading Circle Review, during the early years of its publication, and when the Catholic Reading Circle movement was most flourishing, we subjoin some lines of work actually carried out in different parts of the country:

Work of a Pittsburg Circle: Its object is like that of similar circles, to further education and promote social intercourse. American history is the major subject of study. Special papers on a topic in the history of our country are read at each meeting and are followed by open discussion.

An acquaintance with good literature is encouraged by the reading of a short story, sketch or poem, together with a brief, but interesting account of the author of the selection. There is no attempt at an exhaustive study of literature. The aim is rather to

give entertainment from the best sources.

A general discussion of some event of current interest is an important part of each meeting's work. Among the subjects which have been treated may be mentioned the Cretan Affair, the Arbitration treaty, the Nicaragua canal, the Dingley bill. Discussion is not limited, but is general in fact as well as in name.

A short poem or some music follows and the meeting closes with an instruction in Church history by Father Canevin.

They Studied the Reformation: We adopted as the *special* work of the year the study of the Reformation, viewing it principally in its religious and historic character. It has afforded much scope for essays and discussions, and is a subject that will be of vital importance to everyone who would know the real foundation of Protestantism, and to a great extent the infidelity and materialism so common in this age.

As we reviewed the Reformation in its rise, progress and results, we contrasted the lives of *its* reformers with

such men as St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Charles Borromeo.

To show the thoroughness with which each character was treated, it will suffice to say that in one evening three essays were given to an analysis of Luther's character. One dealt with him as a Catholic, another portrayed him in his role as a reformer, and a third was given to a description of his interior life. But our work in the literary line is not limited to the study of the Reformation; selections are read from the poets, and essays are frequently contributed dealing with some feature of a poet's life and writings.

Work of a New York Reading Circle: The first half of the year was devoted to Roman history and Virgil's Æneid for home study, and the last half to the history of the Middle Ages and Dante's Inferno.

At the weekly meetings the members (one-fourth of whom were on the program each week), gave discussions and reviews of the work of that week, together with supplementary work having a bearing on the same subject.

The supplementary reading was

gleaned from the following sources: "The Idea of a University," Cardinal Newman eleven chapters; "Pilgrims and Shrines," Eliza Allen Starr, six chapters.

A review of each of the following historical novels: "Fabiola," Cardinal Wiseman; "Callista," Cardinal Newman; "Dion and Sybils," Miles Gerald Keon; eight stories from the "Gesta Romanorum;" the story of St. Cecelia's martyrdom, from Chaucer's "Canterbury's Tales."

In February we began the Middle Ages and Dante's "Inferno," prefacing the latter by Brother Azarias' essay on the "Spiritual Sense of the Divina Commedia." We have read and discussed Gazeau's "Middle Ages" through the Crusades, and we have had twenty-one cantos of the "Inferno" read at the meetings.

A Philadelphia Circle: We are still engaged on the "Faith of Our Fathers;" a chapter is read at every meeting and discussed; which discussion often leads us into the meshes of Church history, sometimes so entangling that we have to make our ques-

tion-box the solver of our difficulties. This we find a very effectual means of brushing up our Church history.

The gleanings are fruitful sources of information and argument; once a month they are taken from the magazines, and at other times from the Catholic papers. Thus we keep posted on the current Catholic events. We certainly feel ourselves growing in reasoning power, knowledge and the use of language.

The following is the program of our last meeting:

1. Roll call—Response—Quotations from Christ's discourse at the Last Supper.
2. Secretary's report.
3. Gleanings from March magazines —Discussion on the same.
4. Question-box on the Schism of the West.
5. Chapter VI. (Faith of Our Fathers) "Perpetuity of the Church," read and discussed.
6. Question-box on the same (for next meeting).

Fenelon Reading Circle—Brooklyn: Our members were divided into three

groups which were designated respectively as the literary, historical and biographical group. At each meeting a short paper was read by a member representing each of these groups. Last winter our line of reading was planned with the intention of throwing some light on the so-called "Dark Ages." As this period covered the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we took up in connection with it the study of the rise of the cathedral.

During the five months that covered our working period, we had fifteen papers prepared on subjects of historical and artistic interest. The length of our program at times precludes the representation on it of more than three members. These papers will therefore not only have to speak for their writers but also for the silent members.

Work of Philadelphia Circles: Early Church History and Sacred Scriptures seem to be the favorite fields for work. In English literature the range is from the early Saxon remains to Aubrey de Vere, "Paradise Lost" and the "Idylls of the King" occupying the most attention. No matter what are

the extras—the Reformation with its history and its notable people, Napoleon and his times, biographies, the varied queries from the question-box, elocution, even physical culture and Delsarte are not neglected, each circle has adopted one or two of the studies outlined by the Summer School committee. Four of the circles have taken up the study of Dante and are trying to learn all they can of the "Divine Comedy" and of the history and people of this turbulent era. Many of the circles have a literary and musical entertainment with each study-meeting. Our circle has made the study of music a feature and has lectures on great masters and their works.

LINES OF WORK.

IT would be an evidence of superficiality to argue that our reading circles could do really thorough work in any department of study. All that they can do for their members is to stimulate and suggest, to cultivate a taste for reading, an interest in subjects of literature, history and science, a discipline of mind resulting from the nurture of such interest, a more facile ability to converse on intellectual topics, and particularly an acquaintance with Catholic literature and a better knowledge of Catholic teachings and Catholic history.

In outlining the season's work, an effort should be made to select that which will most interest the greatest number, and for that purpose a full and free discussion at the outset is desirable.

The features of the ordinary successful reading circle program are: (1) some musical numbers to open and close the meeting; (2) attention to the

social side, which may be subserved by a recess of ten or fifteen minutes in the middle of the evening, or by an occasional reception to some visiting lecturer or Catholic man or woman of eminence; (3) some lighter literary features of a miscellaneous character; (4) the solid study work of the season, which demands a connected series of topics, or the use of some special book or books as a text.

Among the miscellaneous literary features which may be interspersed on an evening's program we may list the following, from among which it will be easy to select two or three:

(1) Roll call with quotations from some poet—saint—statesman.

(2) A brief paper conveying information on some current topic.

(3) A recitation or oration.

(4) A book review, dealing with some current novel, with some well-known Catholic book or some masterpiece of a great author.

(5) Five minutes readings from the current magazines.

(6) A connected series of papers—one for each evening, covering the different phases of some special topic, as

for instance, "Socialism."

(7) The Question Box. Answers to questions placed in the circle's question box at the previous meeting. (This work to be in charge of a committee.)

The plan of selecting two or three text books for the season's study, has been followed with success by most of our reading circles. Substantially, this is the Chautauquan plan also. There are a number of text books which reading circles have used with considerable profit in the past. Among those recommended by The Reading Circle Review, or the association of circles affiliated with the Columbian Catholic Summer School, may be mentioned: "Chapters on Bible Study," Rev. H. J. Heuser (75c); "Bible and Science," Rev. J. A. Zahm ($1.25); "Christian Art," Edith Healy (75c); "Books and Reading," Brother Azarias ($1.00); "Mooted Questions of History," H. J. Desmond (75c); "Christian Ethics," Father Conway, S. J. (50c); "History of the Church in America," Bishop O'Gorman.

The following examples illustrate the way the work might be laid out

in the use of the above text books:

"BIBLE, SCIENCE AND FAITH."

The eleven chapters of this book might be apportioned so as to furnish material for some twenty sessions of the reading circle. The method herewith suggested in the study of chapters I. and II. may be applied to the remaining chapters:

First Evening: Chapter I.—"Moses and Science."

The class leader designated for the first chapter leads in a conversational discussion of ancient cosmogonies, calling, as the meeting progresses, for brief papers, pre-arranged, to be presented by members appointed by the class leader on the following topics:

Brahma;

The Mahabharata;

Sketch of Pythagoras, Plato and Ptolemy;

Reading of the first chapter of Genesis.

Second Evening: Chapter I.—(continued.)

Conversational discussion led by the class leader with five minute papers on:

The Hebrews and the Chaldeans;

Sketch of Moses;

Works on "The Conflict Between Science and Religion;"

Catholic Scientists.

Third Evening: Chapter II.—Allegorism and Literalism.

In the discussion of the chapter, brief papers or oral reports may be assigned by the class leader to his assistants on such matters:

(a) History of the city of Alexandria;

(b) Sketch of Origen;

(c) Explanation of such words as "ecletic," "allegorism," "Haxameron," "via media," etc.

(d) Antioch, Edessa, Cæsarea and early Christianity in Syria.

"MOOTED QUESTIONS OF HISTORY."

First Evening: The Dark Ages.

The exercise may include the reading of the chapter on this topic and a series of brief papers or oral reports on mediæval events, such as:

(a) The great migration;

(b) Gothic architecture;

(c) Charlemagne;

(d) Alfred the Great;

(e) Dante and the "Divine Comedy;"

(f) Thomas a Kempis.

The references furnished in the quotations appended to the chapter on the Dark Ages will direct to sources of information on these sub-topics.

Second Evening: "Christianity as a Civilizer."

Reading of the chapter which touches upon the following sub-topics, which are to be covered in brief papers or oral reports from members previously designated:

(a) Ancient Slavery;

(b) Chivalry;

(c) The Truce of God;

(d) Mediæval Trade Guilds.

Members may be requested to find for these topics as well as all other topics, apposite quotations from leading historians in line with the quotations the text book contains.

The study of a series of connected topics is best illustrated by reference to the syllabi of a course of university extension lectures, or the outlines of lectures printed in the prospectuses of our summer schools. The late Eliza Allen Starr, for instance, in one

of her art lectures, covered these salient points in discussing the Sistine Chapel:

"Story of the Sistine Chapel—The Scheme of Salvation instanced in the Decoration of the Walls—How Michael Angelo Enters into this Scheme in His Genealogical Series of Groups.

"Prophets and Sybils as Interpreters of the Old Testament Narrations—The Scripture Stories on the Ceiling—The Last or Universal Judgment as a Summing up of all History and of all Narrative in the Essential Facts of Man Created and Man Redeemed."

The Reading Circle Union affiliated with the Catholic Summer School (Warren E. Mosher, secretary, 39 East Forty-second street, New York), aims "to give those who desire to pursue their studies, after leaving school, an available opportunity to follow prescribed courses of the most approved reading; to enable others, who have made considerable progress in education, to review their past studies, and, particularly, to encourage individual *home* reading and study on systematic and Catholic lines."

Its course, which is repeated every

four years, is as follows:

1892-93.

American History.
American Literature.
History of the Church in America.
American Institutions.
Political Science.
Chemistry.
Social Questions.

1893-94.

Ancient and Roman History.
History of Ancient Literature.
Science and Religion.
Evidences of Religion.
Sociology.
Archæology.
Historical Romances.

1894-95.

Church History—First Five Centuries.
Early English Literature.
Science—Physics, Astronomy.
Sacred Scripture.
Topics of the Day and Current Literature.
Literary Studies.

1895-96.

History of the Church in the Middle Ages.
Roman and Mediæval Art.

Social and Economic Questions.
Studies in Literature.
Physical Geography.
Geology.
Mediæval Civilization.

For the year 1896-97, the course of 1892-93 is repeated, and so on.

In order to establish a central bureau for the guidance of the Catholic reading public, to foster the growth of reading circles, and to secure a permanent combination of forces for the diffusion of good literature, The Catholic World Magazine, June, 1889, announced the formation of the Columbian Reading Union, which was located at the house of the Paulist Fathers, 415 West Fifty-Ninth street, New York City. "An appeal was made for the voluntary co-operation of those having a knowledge of books, so that guide lists might be prepared at small cost for those seeking the information thus rendered available. Catholic writers were especially invited to take part in the new movement; assistance was also expected from librarians and others qualified to make selections from the best books published. Many individuals, as well as those identified with

Catholic reading circles, gladly donated small amounts of money, besides giving their time and energy to make known the ways and means of extending the influence of Catholic literature, and to secure a place of deserved recognition for Catholic authors in public libraries.

"The members of Catholic reading circles became active in disseminating the opinions put forth in these pages, so that now it is gratifying to observe a general tendency to encourage the circulation of books representing the culture and learning of Catholic writers. Every reading circle formed among Catholics should endeavor to assist in this good work of cultivating a feeling of loyalty to their own representatives in the world of letters."

A CURRENT TOPIC CLUB.

THOUGHTFUL readers of the newspapers are constantly coming across topics and lines of inquiry, which they would fain pursue further. A good atlas, a good book of up-to date statistics, a dipping into the magazine articles on the subject, sometimes satisfies these quests for fuller information. For such intelligent readers a "Current Topic Club" would be useful.

The method followed in one of these clubs is thus described:

"The first paper of the evening was called for, a *resume* of the great events in the world since the club had last met. This was read by one of the younger members, and for ten minutes he catalogued those happenings in the world of politics, society, science, art and religion which had especially attracted his attention.

"Then followed, for twenty minutes, an animated discussion largely in the form of question and answer, in which

the reader of the paper and the president of the club were put through a thorough examination. 'Spain and her Colonies" was the main theme of the evening, which was treated in four papers of six minutes each, followed in every case by a brief discussion. 'Present-day Politics in Old Spain' brought out the form of government of this constitutional monarchy, its method of legislation, its cabinet ministry, etc. The intelligent questions that followed indicated an unexpected amount of information on the part of the members. Here, again, the president had to take the brunt of the questioning, and by dint of a good map of the country and the aid of the 'Statesman's Year Book' (published annually by the Macmillans), managed to satisfy most demands.

"Then came two papers on 'Spain in the Philippine Islands' and 'Spain in the West Indies.' All had followed with eagerness the shifting scenes in Cuba about which the papers had told so many truths and so many lies. A good map helped make definite the whole struggle.

"The subject for the next meeting

and the readers were announced—'Alaska, Her Gold Mines, and the Seals.' The executive committee handed slips of paper to those appointed to read, indicating the best books, and especially the recent magazine articles bearing upon the proposed topic, and the club adjourned to meet a month hence."

A less studious and systematic method might also be adopted. Let the subject, for instance, be "The Irish Home Rule Movement." Two members of the club may be directed to bring in and read a ten or fifteen minute article on the subject, either from reliable works or from the current magazines. A chapter from Sullivan's "New Ireland," and a portion of Gladstone's speech upon introducing the Home Rule bill in 1886, would serve the purpose. Then let "queries" be in order, intended to secure an easy interchange of information and affording an incentive to members to read up on the topic, not only before the meeting, but afterwards.

A MONTHLY NOVEL CLUB.

THE members agree to read a designated novel during the month, and to meet at the close of the month for discussion. A postal card is sent each member indicating the novel to be read, the points to be specially noted in the story and the subjects for discussion drawn therefrom. The date of the meeting is set and arrangements are made for one or two papers suggested by the novel, and an informal discussion of its difficulties or problems.

Suppose the novel selected is Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." The postal card so announces; and also contains suggestions as follows:

Note these points:

(1) Unflattering characters of all the women portrayed.

(2) The London of 1812.

(3) The social status—obsequious ness towards the aristocracy; the vulgar love of riches.

(4) The rhetorical art of Thackeray.

His facility of touch, as, for instance, in the line telling of the death of George Osborne.

A Problem: How explain Dobbin's constant admiration for Amelia?

Two papers: (1) The character of Becky. Is it unnatural?

(2) Rawdon Crawley.

Novel selected: "Pride and Prejudice," by Jane Austen.

Points noted:

(1) Characters are drawn not by description, but by conversation and action.

(2) How explain the earlier attitude of D'Arcy in the story?

(3) Contrasts in the characters of the sisters.

Discussion: On the character ascribed to Mr. Collins. (Herein read Macaulay's sketch of the English clergy in the eighteenth century.)

Novel selected: "Dion and the Sybils."

Points to be noted: (1) Wherein the novel is heavy for the average reader —in the discussion by Dion before Augustus.

(2) Is not Paulius rather than Dion the chief character, and is not the title of the story misleading in this particular?

(3) As a historical novel, note its general accuracy.

(4) Which is the more absorbing episode in the tale?

Papers: (1) What do we know, historically, of the Sybils?

(2) Contrast the story with Ben Hur by Lew Wallace.

Novel selected: "Disappearance of John Longworthy," by Maurice Francis Egan.

Points to be noted: (1) The author's acquaintance with New York life and the circles he portrays.

(2) Is it a purpose, a problem, or a satirical story?

(3) The two improbabilities of the story: John's disappearance and Mary's devotion to her brother.

Paper: Miles as a type of the ward politician.

THE BEST NOVELS.

WHAT are the best Catholic stories, and what stories by non-Catholics may be recommended to the Catholic readers?

Here, by way of suggestion, are twelve excellent Catholic novels: 1. "Fabiola," by Cardinal Wiseman. 2. "Callista," by Cardinal Newman. 3. "Dion and the Sybils," by Keon. 4. "The Collegians," by Griffin. 5. "A Sister's Story," Craven. 6. "Saracenesca," Crawford. 7. "Disappearance of John Longworthy," by Egan. 8. "My New Curate," by Father Sheehan. 9. "Old and New," by Mrs. Sadlier. 10. "Marcella Grace," by Rosa Mulholland. 11. "Philip's Restitution," by Christian Reid. 12. "The Way of the World, and Other Ways," by Katherine Conway.

Non-Catholic Novels: Why of course the Catholic reader may go outside the list of purely Catholic novelists; moreover, hundreds do so, and it

is to be regretted that they wander towards muddy brooks instead of towards clear and limpid waters. They read Ouida, Mrs. Holmes, Bertha M. Clay the "Duchess" and stories of that sort. There is a whole world of better, higher and more helpful fiction. F. Marion Crawford, Mary A. Tincker and Justin McCarthy are Catholic writers in the service of the general non-Catholic public; their works are neutral religiously, but for the sake of the story, unobjectionable. There is nothing the matter with Mrs. Oliphant's, Miss Mulock's Trollope's or Stevenson's fiction and almost any of the leading American novelists, Hawthorne, James, Howells, Harte, Cable or Stockton are safe. Yet when we come to consider the shortness of life and the large number of good Catholic stories available, we are inclined to think that the craving for fiction can be almost supplied within the fold.

As a list of novels from the field of general literature, the following may be recommended:

Walter Scott: "Ivanhoe."

Jane Austen: "Pride and Prejudice."

Goldsmith: "Vicar of Wakefield."

Thackeray: "Vanity Fair" or "Esmond."

Buchanan: "Father Anthony."

George Elliot: "Middlemarch."

Churchill: "Richard Carvel" or "The Crisis."

Thompson: "Alice of Old Vincennes."

Halevy: "Abbe Constantine."

James: "Washington Square."

Howells: "Rise of Silas Lapham."

Sienkiewicz: "Quo Vadis." (Curtin's translation.)

Historical Novels: Upon the score of fairness to the Church, most historical novels in the English language are unfortunate. But even aside from this fact, such novels cannot be recommended to the student of history; they exaggerate the romantic element, which, after all, plays but a small part in the movements of history. In this connection the following passage from Andrew Lang is of interest:

"How far an historical novelist is bound to cleave to historical truth is a question that has settled itself. He is not bound at all. This great blow for freedom was struck by Scott. The

question whether or not it is wise to use these privileges is different. Nobody knows or cares whether Amy Robsart was dead (as she was) before 'Kenilworth' begins; nobody cares for the circumstance that Shakespeare could not have been about the court at the period covered by the tale. But I do not like Scott to move on or move back, whichever it is, the death of the Bishop of Liege in 'Quentin Durward.' Perhaps it is pedantic to spoil an effect of M. Zola's in 'Lourdes,' by consulting the continental 'Bradshaw,' and demonstrating that there is no such train as that on which his effect depends. Perhaps, however, this is fair against that friend of 'documents,' M. Zola. Perhaps 'Esmond' comes nearer to historical truth than any other famous historical novel. The death of the Duke of Hamilton comes in very fortunately for the conduct of the plot, and it is perhaps an advantage that it is historically right. The Chevalier might have done as Thackeray makes him do, leaving Atterbury in the lurch, as he was really left by Ormonde and the Earl Marischal. 'Esmond' may be full of historical *bevues,*

but they escape my notice if they exist, and ignorance here is bliss."

TRAVEL STUDIES.

WHETHER we are on the eve of a trip to Europe, or whether we have that pleasure among the possibilities of the future, or whether we are never to cross the ocean, there is profit and entertainment in travel studies. We all want to know something about the capitals of Europe, about the life of the people in the different countries of the old world, about the historic places, about the great cathedrals and their architecture, and about the art treasures of southern Europe.

Nine out of ten travelers who visit Europe, spend three-fourths of their time in Catholic countries. Why? Because these countries have the art galleries, the finest churches, architecturally, and they best preserve their historic continuity.

As a consequence, these are the countries to visit and to study for the purpose of culture, suggestion, entertainment and instruction. It is probable,

too, that on the side of life and amusement these countries also have their superiority. There is more life in Vienna than in Berlin, more picturesqueness among the people of the Tyrol than among the people of Denmark.

Italy, as far as the question of culture goes, is better worth visiting than all the rest of Europe combined. Florence alone is more valuable for the discriminating student of art than all England.

These views are emphasized in "The European Tour," by Grant Allan. The author, an Oxford man and the son of an Anglican clergyman, was a great traveler in his day; he published several well-known travel books. "Except Italy," he says, "there is nothing in Europe so valuable, so instructive as Belgium." He continues:

"Belgium has escaped the terrible cataclysm of the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution far better than any other part of northwestern Europe. In England, you get only the bare skeletons of cathedrals and churches, robbed of their sculpture, their painting and their decorative work by the grasping grantees

of Henry VIII. or the brutal Puritan soldiers of Cromwell's army. * * But Belgium, though severely treated by the early reformers and the Spanish hordes, still retains for us more of its mediæval splendor than any other part of modern Europe."

He concludes that it is far more important for the traveler to see the cities of Belgium than even London or Paris. "Holland falls flat after Belgium."

It is singular to find this author disparaging the only art gallery of Germany which is at all famous, that of Dresden. At best it is a "scratch collection." Its finest works are those of Italian masters.

Grant Allan's entire book sings the praises of Italy as the Mecca for travelers. Even Switzerland he smites with this remark: "Between the Rhine and Italy lie the Alps; and one way or another you will have to get over them."

After all, it is not the docks, the shipping, the great bales of merchandise, the smoky railway terminals and the crowded manufacturing cities that give a country value and interest to

the traveler and the man of culture. There is something else. There are attributes of a truer civilization, and the criticism of such a book as the one we have instanced will help one to understand this.

Yet, for ancestral reasons, many of us will find a special interest in Irish or German travel; and our literature cultivates for us, an interest in England and its historic places, that the true cosmopolitan may not feel but may understand. So far as natural scenery is concerned, our own country, with its Niagara, its Mammoth cave, its canon of the Colorado, its Yosemite valley and its Yellowstone park, should have the first place in our travel studies.

We realize that prejudice and point of view may color travel studies, just as they color history, biography and even geography. But the Americans, as a nation of travelers, have a rich variety of travel books, and among them are many that are written with breadth of view and fine intuition. Who, for instance, can find much to except to in "Penelope's Irish Experiences"? Among the travel books from

Catholic American sources we may mention: "Europe and the Holy Land," by Father Fairbanks; "A Journey with the Sun," by Dr. McMahon; Miss Conway's "New Footsteps in Well Trodden Ways," and "As the Bishop Saw It" (Borgess).

THE SUMMER SCHOOL.

AMERICANS, who work with a nervous assiduity during most of the year, crave a short vacation in the summer months. Thousands kill time in the frivolities of summer resorts—enjoying a change that is hardly a rest, and returning to the grind of the desk's dead wood with no specially new spring of life. The Summer School, if rightly used, is a device to make our vacations more restful and more genuinely tonic. It is the mind and the nerves that are tired. It is the application of a new idea to these, or the inspiration of brighter associations, that is most needed. The Summer School idea is not to furnish profound or recondite treatment of philosophy or literature. It is a happy adjustment of instruction to the disposition of the summer tourists and to the climate that environs them. Be the gain little or much, it is, at any rate, a gain.

It appears that the Catholic Summer School was first suggested in the columns of The Freeman's Journal by Maurice Francis Egan, then associate editor with James A. McMaster; and that the Winter School at New Orleans was first suggested in the columns of The Reading Circle Review. All this, however, may be admitted without detracting from the fame of the actual prime-mover, W. E. Mosher, or without lessening the claim of Father Mullaney as father of the Winter School, or Father Nugent as its active organizer. Father Sheedy of Altoona, Pa., its first president, and Dr. Loughlin of Philadelphia, were also very much concerned in the initial steps that led to the first session of the Summer School at New Haven, Conn., in July, 1892. If we are not mistaken, it was a letter of Dr. Loughlin that set it a-going.

The Western Summer School had its inception at "The Lilacs," Dr. Egan's pleasant Notre Dame home, in the spring of 1895. And the three conspirators, who met there, decided to go ahead if the co-operation of Hon. W. J. Onahan could be secured. Mr.

Onahan and Father Agnew came at once actively into the movement, which was further strengthened by the adhesion of Bishop Messmer.

The meaning of the Catholic Summer School as an intellectual and church influence need only be mentioned to be understood and appreciated. The bringing together of two or three thousand Catholics from all sections of the country, representing the intelligence of those sections, the contact established between such intelligence, and the best thought of the Catholic religious orders and universities, is something far-reaching in its consequences. Catholic views and Catholic inspirations are, through such a summer gathering, spread throughout all parts of the country, and a Catholic impetus is carried back into every community by those who have come from that locality to the Summer School. Not only does the Catholic community of the especial town in which the school is held, assume a new respectability in the eyes of the Protestant public, but the existence of such a school and the reports of its sessions constitute an object lesson for the

Protestant population of the entire country, presenting the Church in a new light, as an institution ready and anxious to foster higher education, and able to gather under its auspices strong men in all its departments of science and literature.

It is only just to admit what the Catholic Reading Circle movement owes to the good example of the Chautauqua Assembly and its circles. Mr. Warren E. Mosher, who in 1891-2 gave the Catholic Reading Circle movement its real impetus was, we believe, a graduate of the Chautauqua course, and Msgr. Conaty, when president of the Champlain Catholic Summer School, declared that it owed its origion to "the demand on part of Catholics of such a school as Chautauqua."

The Chautauqua idea is only about twenty-five years old, but in that time over 10,000 Chautauqua circles have been formed and a quarter of a million people were enrolled therein. Of course these circles are transient; at present there are less than one thousand of them in existence. The movement is however by no means losing ground. Reading Circles and Sum-

mer Schools have been sneered at as superficial, but this has been done only by persons who lack acquaintance with the movement.

"The Chautauqua summer assembly in July and August of every year is planned in accordance with the principle followed by the Reading Circle. For the many there are popular lectures, concerts, entertainments; for a somewhat less number there are philosophical, scientific and literary lectures in progressive courses; for the comparatively few are provided means for careful study under the able and well-known instructors. The Chautauqua assembly should be judged, not by its recreative exercises, but by its educational classes."

Professor Boyeson on his return from Chautauqua several years ago said:

"Nowhere else have I had such a vivid sense of contact with what is really and truly American. The national physiognomy was defined to me as never before; and I saw that it was not only instinct with intelligence, earnestness and indefatigable aspiration, but that it revealed a strong af-

finity for all that makes for righteousness and the elevation of the race. The confident optimism regarding the future which this discovery fostered was not the least boon I carried away with me from Chautauqua."

Superficiality is one of the easiest charges to make in this age of specialists but even a great specialist once said:

"To myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

There are now sixty summer assemblies in this country after the pattern of the Chautauqua; while in England and Australia, the Oxford and Cambridge summer meeting are cheerful imitators of this American idea. Of course we may say that the university extension idea, which is analagous to that of the Chautauqua and in fact an impulse from it, is as old as the middle ages. But there is a germ of every new thing in the past. It is more just to give the Chautauqua people full credit for their idea.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC SPIRIT.

THERE are certain activities, in the direction of a public spirited sense of obligation to the Catholic intellectual life of the community, that our Reading Circles may properly engage in. Among these the following may be mentioned:

CATHOLIC BOOKS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Most American cities of over 20,000 have public libraries at present. In the larger public libraries there is a system, whereby on written request of any user of the library, new books may be purchased. This system is practically in vogue, also in all the smaller free libraries. The librarian is apt to provide for the circulating shelves any book for which there is a demand.

Catholics can not ask that devotional books be placed in the public libraries; but it ought to be their endeavor to get Catholic histories, essays, and doctrinal books there. They are thus

taking precautions against public ignorance and misapprehension of Catholic views.

Let Catholics notice the Catholic books described and reviewed from time to time in their Catholic newspapers and let them send in the titles thereof (with the name of the publishers) to their local library, with a request that such books be placed on the shelves. This is a little step in behalf of Catholic truth that is within the reach of every one.

CATHOLIC LECTURE COURSES.

Seasons of the popular lyceum come and go from decade to decade in the United States. There are years when even small towns of five thousand or more inhabitants have their winter lecture course. Usually if the Catholic element in these small towns amount to anything in the intellectual life of the community, the people who manage the lecture course will take Catholic patronage into account and there will be some feature of the course—either a Catholic lecturer, or a Catholic lecture topic sympathetically treated, which will encourage Catholic at-

tendance.

In cities where the Catholic population amounts to ten thousand or more, a Catholic lecture course is always possible and advisable. There is now a Catholic lyceum bureau, (the Columbian, with Father Francis C. Kelly of Lapeer, Michigan, President), which may be asked to arrange such Catholic lecture courses. There are available Catholic lecturers like Bishop Spalding, Dr. Stafford, Dr. Adams, Bourke Cockran and Charles J. Bonaparte, who are the peers of any kings of the rostrum. There are many eloquent priests, Catholic professors and Catholic lawyers, who are competent lecturers; and who confining themselves to Catholic topics, and speaking directly to Catholic social and intellectual needs, may wonderfully stimulate and elevate the Catholic life of a city. It is often left to the Reading Circle to consider the organization of Catholic lecture courses and to make the same possible.

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PARISH LIBRARIES.

It is by no means certain that the people of our congregations would

read Catholic books if they had them in so-called "parish libraries." The fact is a reflection that each congregation must explain for itself. So many of our people are Catholics by routine and not by intelligence and so many of us are in the habit of thinking it is all right for the future to depend on a Catholicity of that kind.

But whether there is a demand for them or not, we believe that parish libraries ought to be provided. They are as necessary as any kind of church furniture or architecture—and they may come to be appreciated by the having—(something that will never befall some of our church architecture, we fear.) If there are no people in a congregation who can appreciate a Catholic circulating library it is time to open a Catholic night school.

THE PROMOTION OF CATHOLIC TRUTH.

The average Catholic is not a propagandist. He has his own religion and he dislikes to obtrude it on his Protestant neighbor. Of course the disposition is altogether gentlemanly. Other things being equal, the religious proselyter has little excuse in the eyes

of the world for his existence. But other things are not equal. The Catholic who wishes to make his religion better known has this plea: His religion is so much villified, so much misunderstood that a prejudice is generated against him in his social and political relations. He meets with constant misapprehensions of his belief among Protestants whose friendship and good will are pleasant to him; and these misapprehensions are of a nature that imply stupidity, gullibility, duplicity and bad citizenship in the Catholic body. If we value a friendship, it seems incumbent on us to make an effort to disabuse our friend of any misconceptions he may entertain of us —whether these misconceptions are individual or collective.

This is a fair excuse for some zeal in promoting Catholic truth. Such zeal is not discoverable in the mass of Catholics, chiefly because their association with Protestants is quite limited. But among a growing class of Catholics there is apt to be an appreciation of such zeal. Those whose association is large and more diverse can appreciate the value of an apostolate of the

press.

It has been frequently noted that our Catholic Reading Circles and public spirited organizations are even today mostly directed and engineered by public school graduates, public school teachers and persons whose association is quite largely with Protestants. Catholic college graduates and those brought up in exclusively Catholic associations are not so active. The explanation is not prejudicial to the Catholicity of the latter. The former have a better appreciation of the value of intelligent zeal; and for the reasons here outlined. But that zeal should be diffused.

"Aid it paper; aid it type;
"Aid it for the hour is ripe.
"And our earnest must not slacken into play.
"Men of thought and men of action clear the way."

MINIMUM CATHOLIC LIBRARY.

BOOKS are the best furniture of the best room. But books are the last article of furniture that are thought of in some households; yet books, magazines and family papers have much to do with making home cheerful.

"In these days of diffused education," says a leading periodical, "every home requires a library as much quite as it requires a parlor, a reception room, a chamber or a kitchen. A place to keep books is one of the first essentials in imparting a tone of thorough refinement to a house. Yet to have the books themselves is more important than to have the special room which is their casket. A corner of the drawing-room, with a table and an easy chair, pens and ink, and a few low shelves, make a capital library. In some charming homes drawing-room and the library are combined, and the books elbow the brac-a-brac and the soft divans and cushioned lounges."

We are disposed to read, usually because the comforts and conveniences of reading are about us. We do not have to go far to pick up the book we want, we may tarry among pleasant surroundings, and the opportunity to read coincides with our leisure for such occupation.

The average Catholic household can afford to possess twenty good Catholic books. Let us name as such "a minimum Catholic library," those books *which will give us the Catholic view point on most important issues* that we meet with as readers of current literature, and which will answer for us most questions, doctrinal and historical, upon which, as Catholics, we wish to be informed:

The Bible. Cloth. (John Murphy Co., Pub., Baltimore.).. .. ..$1.00

Life of Christ. Rev. Walter Elliot. (Catholic Book Exchange, Pub., N. Y.).. .. ..1.00

The Imitation of Christ. (Benziger Bros.).. .. ..50c

Short Lives of the Saints. (Marlier Co.) 2 vols.. .. ..1.00

Correct Thing for Catholics. Bugg. (Benziger Bros., N.Y.) ..75c

Handbook of the Christian Religion. Rev. Wilmers, S.J. (Benziger Bros., Pub., N. Y.).. ..net 1.50

Faith of Our Fathers. Cardinal Gibbons. (John Murphy Co., Pub., Baltimore.).. .. ..1.00

Catholic Belief. Rev. Faa di Bruno, D.D. (Benziger Bros., Pub., N. Y.).. .. ..50c

The Catholic Dictionary, Addis and Arnold, (Christian Press Assoc., N. Y.).. .. ..2.50

A History of the Catholic Church. Dr. H. Brueck. 2 vols. (Benziger Bros., N. Y.).. .. ..net 3.00

A History of the Catholic Church in the United States. By Bishop O'Gorman. (New York: Christ. Lit. Co.).. .. ..2.00

A Child's History of Ireland. Dr. P. W. Joyce. (Longmans, Green & Co., N. Y.).. .. ..1.25
(From the earliest times to the death of O'Connell. Adapted for adults.)

Lingard's History of England. Burke's Abridgement, School Edition. (John Murphy Co.. .. .. ..1.50

Mooted Questions of History. Desmond. (Marlier Co., Boston.).. 75c

Bible, Science and Faith. Dr. J. A. Zahm. (John Murphy Co.) 1.25

Chapters in Bible Study. Rev. H. J. Heuser. (Cathedral Library, N. Y.).....1.00

Socialism and Labor and Other Arguments. Bishop Spalding. (McClurg, Chicago.).....1.00

Life of Leo XIII. Justin McCarthy. (N. Y.: Frederick Warne., Pub.).....1.50

A Visit to Europe and the Holy Land. Father Fairbanks. (Benziger Bros., Pub., N. Y.).....1.50

Christian Art. Edith Healy. (Benziger Bros., Pub., N. Y.)..50c

These twenty books, listed at $25, may undoubtedly be had through any Catholic publisher (if purchased altogether), at not over $20. Very frequently that amount is squandered on a costly Bible or on a few bulky volumes sold on subscription.

THE READING HABIT.

RISEN from the ranks. Poor boy becomes rich man. Little schooling, nevertheless—statesman! Cooper, Greeley, Lincoln—the procession is endless. We have them paraded before us to excite our emulation. Examplars for our youth. Careers calculated to stir our ambition, etc.

But how did they rise? Primarily, the cause lay in the fact that they had brains. But brains are like success and riches,—not to be had by the mere wishing. Where did these men get their brains, their ideas, their mighty conceptions, aims, purposes?

These men *read*. Their fund of information was not gathered at the corner grocery, but from the great books of the world. Their ideas were not contracted to the fashion of the cross-road neighborhood or the tenement block; their vision of the world was not shut in by Black-bass creek or the limits of St. Michael's parish; their knowledge of man was not confined to

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a ward election or a county fair, but their conversance with books made them the masters of the wisdom of other times and other places; the familiars of the great thinkers, teachers, philosophers, wits and statesmen, whose ideals, successes and wisdom they made part of their own experience.

In that manner they gathered ideas and purposes of their own. They were thus inspired with ambitions, and the wisdom to work upwards to the ends they sought. This will appear from a close study of the lives of all truly successful men. Books did a great deal for them. A taste for reading was the most valuable element of their education, whether their education stopped at the common school or projected beyond it.

The moral is that a people's institutions, its schools and its church life fail in a very important respect if this element in the intellectual and moral up-raising of the people is deficient.

Finding Time: An English scientist learned Spanish by picking up a book every time his wife kept him waiting to complete her evening toilet.

A goodly history volume may be read "between times," waiting for dinner, or traveling on the street cars, or fifteen minutes before breakfast. We are a hurried people, but there is a way to find time for reading "in the pauses of the rush."

To Remember What You Read: "Interest is the mother of attention," and attention is the mother of memory. Many readers follow the practice of marking the margins of the pages they read (for re-reading), or making notes on slips of paper between the leaves, or copying salient passages in a commonplace book. Conversation and discussion are still better methods of fixing the results of your reading.

Plans of Reading: The trouble with "mapping out courses of reading" is that the task set appalls the reader. Scatter a litter of interesting books in the way of one who would cultivate the reading habit, and let chance suggest what will interest. Sir Herbert Maxwell says:

"If any young person of leisure were so much at a loss as to ask advice as

to what he should read, mine should be exceedingly simple. Read anything bearing on a definite object. Let him take up any imaginable subject to which he feels attracted, be it the procession of the equinoxes or postage stamps, the Athenian drama or London street cries; let him follow it from book to book, and unconsciously his knowledge, not of that subject only, but of many subjects, will be increased, for the departments of the realm of knowledge are divided by no octroi. He may abandon the first object of his pursuit for another; it does not matter, one subject leads to another; he will have acquired the habit of acquisition; he will have gained that conviction of the pricelessness of time which makes it intolerable for a man to lie abed of a morning."

Edward Everett Hale says that one may become the best informed person in his community on any special topic by simply reading up on it in the local libraries.

But the object should not be to cram for the post of a pedant, but to read as a matter of pure enjoyment. All other pleasures of life take their de-

parture. Some bowing adieu at thirty, some at fifty, some at sixty; but the pleasure of the reading habit lasts till death. The theater palls upon the taste, music loses its charms, one's appetite goes with one's digestion and one's teeth, but while the intellect lasts, the pleasure which good books give to the intellect continues.

[Rev. J. L. O'Neil's "Why, When, How and What to Read," (Marlier, Boston), Brother Azarias on "Books and Reading," Fatner O'Connor's "Reading and the Mind," (a book too good to be permanently out of print), and Dr. Egan's "Studies in Literature," (Herder), are Catholic reading guides that may advantageously be consulted in mapping out courses of reading.]

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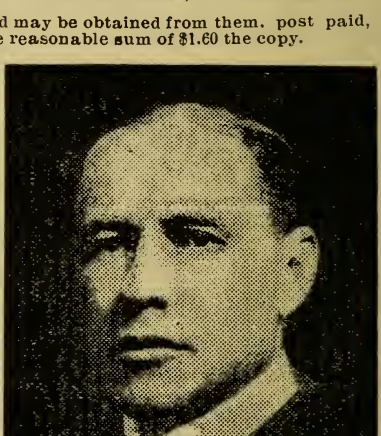

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